INVESTIGATIVE LONGFORM

Banning Affirmative Action?

Marin '25 interviews President Wippman and the Admissions department on the College's response to the potential ban. **pages 11-12**

A&E

boygenius Album Review

Tolliver '26 reviews the sophmore collaborative album from indie artists Pheobe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus and Julien Baker. **page 6**

SPORTS

UConn Basketball Win

Williams '25 recounts the University of Conneticut men's basketball team's meteoric rise to becoming national champions. **page 10**

The Spectator

Thursday, April 13, 2023

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Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

RAIN wins annual Pitch Competition

by Erin Delaney '26
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

On April 4, Elliot Carlson ’23 and Jacob Gliedman ’23 won the live virtual final round of Hamilton’s annual Pitch Competition and were awarded $20,000 for their career services platform RAIN. The seven-month long entrepreneurial competition began in September, where participants submitted a two-minute video pitch of their idea. Throughout October and early November, teams met with a variety of mentors and notable speakers. In late November and December, teams were matched with mentors, who advised them on their concepts, and submitted their first rounds of pitch decks. In January, final pitch presentations were recorded for review by a panel of Hamilton alumni. These judges later evaluated the submissions and selected three finalists.

The initial idea for RAIN came about during the spring of Carlson and Gliedman’s junior year as they applied for summer internships in finance. They were both studying abroad at the Stockholm School of Economics at the time and began talking about the job recruitment process with each other.

They found the career services industry to be extremely fragmented, with very few platforms servicing more than one step of the process. There was no consolidated tool that students could use to apply for jobs and internships. Gliedman recalls Carlson turning to him and asking, “I wonder if we could create something where we could aggregate all of these different [sites]?” They began researching job recruitment tools that currently exist in the market, and the beginnings of RAIN were born.

RAIN covers every step of the job search process through personalized job searching, resumé and cover letter building, networking, application trackers and interview preparation. Instead of having to manage the job application process through a number of separate websites, RAIN consolidates it into one place that keeps you on track with automated to-do lists, reminders and individualized portals for each application.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELLIOT CARLSON '23 AND JACOB GLIEDMAN '23

Winners Jacob Gliedman '23 (left) and Elliot Carlson '23 (right) created the platform RAIN.

Carlson and Gliedman found Hamilton’s emphasis on speaking, presenting and communicating effectively to be invaluable during the pitch competition. Their experiences pursuing economics concentrations provided them with a strong financial background and business perspective that helped them build the business model of RAIN. The statistics and computer science classes Gliedman has taken at Hamilton provided him with experience working with a team and presenting data. Carlson’s other concentration in art gave him the opportunity to put his web design skills to use while making RAIN’s user interface visually appealing and comprehensive. He says this creative aspect of his academic experience at Hamilton taught him how to “bring [an idea] from the bottom and create it into something that is way bigger than what it started as.”

The winning team adjusted their schedules this year to make the development of RAIN a priority. Gliedman took an independent study in the data science department with Professor Chinthaka Kuruwita to work on the data collection and analytics side of the platform. Carlson took an independent study in the Art department with Professor Ella Gant on the RAIN wireframe and UX/UI design. Their pitch competition mentors, Margaret Bacheler ’93 and David Lahey ’83, brought their business expertise to RAIN by assisting Gliedman and Carlson in forming a long-term plan that divided the project up into manageable steps. Gliedman noted that the mentors had complementary skill sets, with Lahey having experience in building his own business and Bacheler using her experience as an angel capital investor to help the team determine how to best present their idea.

Over the course of the pitch competition, Carlson and Gliedman incorporated two other groups from the job recruitment ecosystem into their product: employers and college career centers. From conversations with Hamilton’s Career Center, other career centers in the area and students at other schools, they were able to better recognize the value that those two groups added to RAIN. RAIN helps to prevent career advisors from being spread thin by managing a large number of students, and the platform provides candidate engagement tracking and qualitative data to help employers find better matches. Carlson and Gliedman have met with almost every employee at the Career Center and say everyone definitely recognizes the value RAIN holds for both students and Career centers. The team is also establishing relationships with schools such as Colgate University, SUNY Binghamton, Utica University and SUNY Oneonta. As for the future of RAIN, Carlson and Gliedman plan on continuing to conduct market research and refining the platform to establish a strong user base of students and schools.

Leading climate scientists visit Hamilton as Morris Fellows, host lectures and workshops

by Stella Essenmacher '25
STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, April 6, and Friday, April 7, Dr. Julia Cole and Hamilton alumnus Dr. Jonathan Overpeck '79, two leading climate research scientists from the University of Michigan, engaged with students from the Hamilton Geosciences and Environmental Studies departments in a series of lectures and workshops.

Thursday began with a series of question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions. The conversation centered around graduate school opportunities and which degrees students might find most useful based on their long-term goals. It was very beneficial for students to discuss these options with people who not only got PhD's themselves, but who also now look over graduate school applications. Both scientists also regularly speak on radio shows, write Op-Eds for newspapers, and speak with lawmakers, farmers and businesses. This multifaceted perspective meant that the expertise they had in different industries was invaluable.

Others got the chance to go to dinner with the speakers that night. Amelia Brown '25, a geosciences and environmental studies double major, shares, "the dinner was two hours long, which sounds like a long time, but the conversation was very natural and they were very open to our questions. They both asked what we were interested in, so they tailored advice to us specifically. I was talking to Dr. Overpeck about how I have an internship in the Senate this year but I don't have a government background. He calmed my fears and said, 'we have a lot of politicians in the government, but we don't really have a lot of scientists.'"

PHOTO BY PROFESSOR DAVID TEWKSBURY

Dr Julia Cole (left) and Dr Jonathan Overpeck (right) meet with several of Hamilton's Geosciences and ES students in a Science Communication workshop.

That evening Overpeck gave a lecture on how storms, droughts and wildfires are getting more intense. He focused part of his talk on megadroughts, which are periods of drought that last longer than 20 years. Towards the end of his presentation, he shared why, despite the depressing statistics, people should have hope. A big takeaway for Brown was that "the science is already here, and we can solve the climate crisis today. If we immediately switched over to renewable energy, we'd stop emitting so much. What just needs to happen is societal change."

On Friday afternoon, Dr. Cole held a workshop about science communication. Cole hopes to train the next generation of scientists to be better at sharing conclusions they make through research with an audience who has the power to make change, like lawmakers or the general public. In the three-hour workshop, students practiced translating complicated scientific papers to be widely accessible, learned how to handle challenging questions during the Q&A portion of a lecture, and even worked on marketing themselves through mastering the art of the elevator pitch.

PHOTO BY PROFESSOR DAVID TEWKSBURY

Dr Jonathan Overpeck presents the lecture *Climate Change 2023: Challenges and Opportunities.*

As the final portion of the visit, Cole hosted a lecture Friday night about her work determining climate change's impact on the El Niño ocean patterns. Each year that El Niño occurs, it leads to heavy rain on one edge of the Pacific Ocean and drought on the opposite edge. She displayed a picture of a coral core, which she had extracted while scuba diving. Corals have ring-like markings that resemble tree rings, and can also be used to chart climatic patterns since they are created in regular intervals.

This opportunity truly showcased Hamilton's strengths as an institution that empowers students to take part in intimate learning environments and become strong communicators and writers, whether that be in the sciences, politics, business or any other field. The messages on climate change shared by the speakers were also inspiring. Brown notes, "It feels like the world is caving in and there's too much to do [to solve climate change] since you're just one person." However, Brown learned that "there's so many unique ways to contribute to solving climate change, and you really need to focus on how you can contribute."

Fall course registration begins for students

by Mia Antonini '26
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

The season has come. Course registration is upon us. This period is filled with a variety of emotions: excitement, stress, and confusion—just to name a few.

Course registration lasts from April 13-21, with each class year given two consecutive days to register. In order to be cleared for the process, each student must be approved by their academic advisor. Until they can select their courses, students are invited to plan their ideal schedule—with backups in the event that seats in their first choices fill up—in Student Planning, where they are able to access next year's course options, including the courses' prerequisites, descriptions and professors.

In the process of course registration, some students, like potential theater and anthropology double major Izzy Haller '26, have been planning ahead. She says, "for this next semester, I went through the entire course catalog…I had to make this super planned out schedule for myself… so I've created my perfect schedule at this point, and I'm happy with it. But there are some things I want to change around still."

The push to organize partly comes from a place of reflection on last semester's course registration process. Haller, a Jan who spent their first semester in London, reflects, "I needed help starting." When she got to campus, she recalls having to change many

PHOTO COURTEY OFGOOGLE MAPS

The Registrar coordinates the course registration process for all Hamilton students. The Office of the Registrar is located in the Elihu Root House on College Hill Road.

classes, with not many options open to her when the time came to do so.

In some ways, despite Haller's organizational success, they wish the school helped them build a spreadsheet like the one they created. "I also wish that the requirements for each major were clearer," she stated. Although they did ultimately find the information they were looking for, they wish there was a way to "organize it so that you could check [classes] off for yourself and plan it."

However, despite the stress that comes with the course registration process, many classes are speaking to students' interests and encouraging their excitement for the semester to come. "I'm just loving the theater classes," Haller says. "I'm really excited to take Theatricalism next semester and…Anthropology of Religion."

According to Assistant Registrar Shannon Feller, the process is not too different from inside the Registrar's Office as it seems to students from the outside. "The process is very similar on both sides," she says, "It's just that our office's system interface looks different from what the students see and use." Similarly, despite course options changing each semester and year, course registration hasn't changed drastically, even under the influence of COVID. Feller notes, "Hamilton's registration process hasn't really changed much at all over the years. It's been the same process since we implemented Self-Service/Student Planning several years ago, with the exception of the fact that we do more online than we did prior to COVID."

Campus Safety Incident Report

In an effort to respect discretion, *The Spectator* and Campus Safety have not disclosed the idenities of the students involved in these reports.

Thursday, April 6

1:58 p.m. Motorist Assist—On Campus

9:27 p.m. Assist—Loop Road

Friday, April 7

8:54 a.m. Parking Complaint—Commons Dining Hall

4:09 p.m. Motorist Assist—Majmacminor Parking Lot

9:28 p.m. Motorist Assist—Ferguson Student Parking Lot

Saturday, April 8

10:18 a.m. Trouble Alarm—Wellin Museum Of Art

8:02 p.m. Assist—Facilities Management

9:50 p.m. Noise Complaint—College Cemetery

10:07 p.m. Animal Complaint—Couper Hall

10:15 p.m. Noise Complaint—Love Field (Pritchard Track)

Sunday, April 9

11:15 a.m. Fire Alarm—Abc House

Monday, April 10

1:02 a.m. Medical Emergency—Babbitt Residence Hall

Tuesday, April 11

2:45 a.m. Medical Emergency—South Residence Hall

1:24 p.m. Motorist Assist—Ferguson Student Parking Lot

2:01 p.m. Motorist Assist—Ferguson Student Parking Lot

Wednesday, April 12

6:11 a.m. Trouble Alarm—Ferguson House

Dear Hamilton Community,

On a sunny day, with time to kill,
I grabbed The Spectator for a thrill.
But the headlines were droll,
Full of news from years of old,
Like "Napoleon Defeated! A Current Event still!"

Disclaimer: Our headlines are very interesting.

Warmly,
Deanna and Anoushka (and ChatGPT)

The Spectator

Corrections & Amplifications

Readers can alert *The Spectator* to any errors in articles by emailing spec@hamilton.edu.

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we *were first published as* The Hamilton Campus *in 1866.*

The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

About Us

The Hamilton College Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Media Board while classes are in session. For more information e-mail spec@hamilton.edu. Our offices are located on the second floor of the Sadove Student Center. The deadline for advertisements is Monday the week of publication. For further information, please e-mail specads@hamilton.edu.*

April 13, 2023

How AI-generated images pose a threat to modern adult entertainment

by Gregoire Winston '26
OPINION EDITOR

Waking up to my usual 8:00 a.m. alarm, I scrolled through Instagram's home page in search of breaking news or original memes to start my day on the right foot. After a few minutes, my eyes finally stumbled on the picture I was looking for: Pope Francis wearing a white puffer coat, sunglasses and an imposing silver chain with a cross on its end. Never would I have expected that the Catholic Pope, the 86 years young supreme leader of the Roman Catholic Church, would rock the swaggiest of Balenciaga white puffer jackets. My mind was blown and so was the Internet's.

In a heartbreaking manner, I quickly found out this reality was too good to be true. CNN, CBS, *The Daily Mail* and a plethora of other reputable news sources had pounced on the internet craze. They pointed out his distorted fingers, his seemingly floating coffee cup and the missing half of his chain. This image had been AI-generated by a 31-year-old Chicago man under the influence of psychedelics. The artificial intelligence image generator he used, Midjourney, is one among a growing number of ever-so-realistic AI-generators. Open to everyone and easy to use for the average Joe, AI-generated images have gained a global reputation for their inventive portrayals of former presidents, entertainment personalities and, obviously, religious leaders.

In my case specifically, falsely believing a picture of the Pope to be true had no devastating consequences on my well-being, aside from slight disappointment. Yet both actors and consumers of adult entertainment will need to tread with caution from now on. Catfishing, a form of identity theft in which one takes on various attributes of their designated victim, tricks bystanders into believing a made-up individual for their personal enjoyment. Pornographic sites are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for catfishing enthusiasts. With this phenomenon on the rise and the addition of AI-generated images gaining traction, online scammers might well be throwing a wrench into the world of XXX websites.

Across its history as a publicly accessible commodity of consumer America, online pornography has repeatedly intertwined with technological advances to make its user experience increasingly pleasurable. From integrated discussion boards to interactive chat rooms, the porn industry has time and again succeeded at offering its viewers a top-of-the-line adult content. Today, the introduction of AI images might well upend this multibillion dollar industry for the worse. A rise in openly accessible fabricated pornography would significantly undermine models' and actors' personal work and their demand for labor in that market. Not only would this replacement hurt male and female actors dependent upon revenue from the industry, but this brings into view a greater issue of female objectification, exploitation and copyright violation.

In 2017, the pornography industry faced a similar threat to that witnessed today. "Deepfake" creators used various computer-generated softwares to paste photos onto videos, most of them to be uploaded on XXX websites. With the click of a few buttons, anyone with baseline photoshop skills could manipulate and weaponize complete strangers' pictures, opening the door to virtually uncontrollable harassment and humiliation. AI-generated images pose an extra layer of concern for potential victims. While "deepfake" creators were only able to edit already existing videos, AI software can create entirely novel photos by retracing the pattern billions of other images were analyzed with. Even more worrisome, AI-generated accounts on OnlyFans, a platform which mainly sells explicit photos and videos, have catfished users out of their money, ushering a new wave of porn scams costing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Combined, consumers and actors of the adult entertainment industry have a daunting task to overcome if they wish to keep their reputation and wallets unscathed. Celebrities such as Natalie Portman, Emma Watson and Donald Trump have all seen their image damaged by "deepfake" porn montages in recent years. Allowing unsuspecting users to witness, and in turn believe, concocted sexual fantasies unbeknownst to the quote-unquote "actor" cross the boundaries of human respect and decency. No matter what, AI advances will play a continuous role in shaping the future of the entertainment industry, whether it be the world of pornography or not. This being said, cultivating an acute awareness of what constitutes an AI-generated image will prove worthwhile for users far and wide. Protecting both users and actors of XXX websites from the threat of ever-changing AI development will be critical towards saving personal lives and their respective reputations.

PHOTO GENERATED BY PABLO XAVIER THROUGH MIDJOURNEY AI

Do not be fooled: this image of Pope Francis sporting a puffy white coat and a massive crucifix on a chain was generated by an AI.

Album Review: boygenius - *the record*

by Madelaine Tolliver '26
A&E STAFF WRITER

As made clear in their Nirvana-inspired cover shoot with *Rolling Stone*, boygenius wants the world to know they are a force to be reckoned with. The group consists of indie it-girls Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus and Julien Baker. The group released an EP in 2018 after coming together through playing various shows and opening for similar artists over the years. The initial EP, which consisted of six songs, was met with much critical acclaim, earning a coveted 8.3 rating from *Pitchfork*. After years of fans asking for the group to release more music, and each artist releasing a solo album in the time since, boygenius has returned stronger than ever with their first full-length album, *the record*.

The album begins with an eerie three-part harmony song with no instrumentals, “Without You Without Them." This opening reminds listeners what they are about to embark on: the collaboration of three powerhouses, each established musicians in their own right. Lucy Dacus’s voice sticks out in a beautiful way in this track, letting her shine in a way she does not through the rest of the album, with her focusing tracks being the more mellow songs (“True Blue,” “Leonard Cohen”) compared to Bridgers’s and Baker’s.

The second, third and fourth songs on the album each branch off from the opening track by allowing each artist to showcase their signature style. Julien Baker takes the lead on “$20” with a strong drum beat and guitar riff that follows her work throughout *the record*. “Emily I’m Sorry” is a Phoebe Bridgers classic: a story song about a girl that is similar to “Graceland Too” off Bridgers’s second solo album, *Punisher*. “True Blue” feels like it was pulled directly from Lucy Dacus’s sophomore album *Home Video* as she steps into the shoes of a girl she's seemingly known for years, similar to her solo tracks “Christine” and “Brando.”

The fourth song on the album is a gut-wrenching song about a relationship that draws in talent from all three artists, allotting them each a chunk of the lyrics to sing. In the song’s bridge, Bridgers sings the haunting lyric “Once, I took your medication to know what it’s like / And now I have to act like I can’t read your mind.” The line captures what many struggle with in a seemingly impossible challenge to understand a loved one dealing with mental illness.

In a drastic shift in mood, the album then moves to the upbeat song “Not Strong Enough.” This song uses a technique often used by the group's members, featuring a happy-seeming beat with melancholy lyrics that don’t seem like they would go together but somehow do. The drums and guitar featured in this song are reminiscent of those in “$20,” no doubt the work of Julien Baker, who takes the lead on this record in a way she did not in the group's first EP.

The middle of the album gives each artist another chance to show off their style, with Bridgers’s “Revolution 0," Dacus’s “Lenoard Cohen” and Baker’s “Satanist.” Though the album is incredibly strong, the few opening and closing tracks definitely stand out the most.

The album ends in a beautiful manner not often attempted by artists, with “Letter To An Old Poet.” In this song, Bridgers takes the lead, and seemingly is speaking to herself, literally bringing in pieces of this “old poet” by sampling the song from the group’s EP, “Me and My Dog.” In “Me and My Dog,” Bridgers sings, “I wanna be emaciated,” which she then echoes in “Letter To An Old Poet” by singing, “I wanna be happy,” showing how she has grown as both an artist and a person, now looking for something so different than she was in 2018 when the EP was released.

Though we do not know if the trio will release another full length album in the future, the group is set to go on a nation-wide tour this summer, and will no doubt continue to do amazing things in their solo careers.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

Released in 2018, boygenius's previous musical effort was a self-titled EP.

Spring Playlist

Canned Heat by Jamiroquai

DESPECHA by ROSALIA

This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody) by Talking Heads

tend the garden by Gang of Youths

GO! by Common

jealousy by FKA twigs ft. Rema

Many Times by Dijon

by Maximo Bratter (A&E Editor)

Food in the room: snack recommendations

by Sabina Feder '25
FOOD COLUMNIST

Every weekend (and a lot of weeknights), I face a dilemma. I'm hungry, but for some reason or other, the dining halls aren't an appealing option (it's too late, I don't want to have to make an appearance in a dining hall and the food just doesn't look good). I go to my trusty snack drawer, and inevitably dig out one of the foods on the list below. None of these are particularly groundbreaking, but God, do they taste good. And, most importantly, they're in the comfort of my dorm room. So let me take you on a tour of some of my favorites in my food drawer.

Microwavable egg poacher: I don't want to scare you away, but you are going to have to bear with me. This first item is not actually food. Let me take you on a journey: It's a Saturday night, and you don't want to leave your room. You have a packet of ramen, but it doesn't quite feel enough, and you know you will be hungry after. Luckily, you read this article and made a smart purchase: this egg cooker. Ninety seconds in the microwave, and you can slide a poached egg on top of your ramen. I swear, a perfectly runny yolk will make your ramen feel restaurant-worthy and honestly make you feel like a put together chef. Ramen with an egg > Ramen without one.

Kimchi: I probably buy a new thing of kimchi every two weeks from Hannafords. Make sure to get the one in the plastic container, not the bagged one. I know it's not the best kimchi, and it does come from a grocery store in central New York (I'm really selling this I know). But a) it's the only kimchi I have found so far in a short radius and b) I just love it so much. Sometimes I just eat it as a snack, but my favorite way to eat it involves some extras. Get some microwave rice and some seaweed, and make yourself a full meal (or snack). It's the perfect post-class, pre-dinner eat.

Peanut Butter Pretzel Bites: Sure, any bin of these will do. But I have a specific one in mind. In the same complex as Thrifty Shopper is this random store called Ollie's. It's a massive discount store chain that sells overstock and items that have outdated-looking packaging. Tucked away on one of the massive shelves is a tub of peanut butter pretzel bites for just $3. This will last you so long and is just a smart purchase. Plus, you get the shopping experience of wandering the shelves and marveling at everything they have in stock (Plastic sled? Camo hunting gloves? Yes, please).

Quaker caramel rice crisps: I know everyone tells college kids to eat rice cakes, but I honestly have no opinions on them. Well, that's not true. Sometimes when I eat one, I can't help but imagine that one of those little packaging peanuts is in my mouth, disintegrating into a slightly cardboard mush. Sorry to everyone who loves rice cakes. But these caramel rice crisps are not that. They may share a name with rice cakes, but they are crispy crunchy wonders of this world. There are a bunch of flavors, but the caramel one just scratches something special in my brain. They're my absolute favorite sweet treat to have around. Be warned though: once you try one, you can never go back.

Chippy Things and Cheesy Strings: Okay, I know this isn't just one little category, but really, it's the combination of chippy things and a cheese stick that I love. Now, you can do any number of combinations. I personally go for Stacy's Thin Pita Chips or Blue Diamond Nut Thins as my chippy thing. Then, just ignore the fact that eating a cheese stick makes you feel like you are in elementary school, and remember how fun it is to pull apart the little strings. If you feel too grown-up for that (but seriously, appreciate the string), there are also cheddar or colby cheese sticks that are also really good. Something about a cheesy crunchy snack will always improve the day.

This list is just a taste of my snacks! I have a couple more essentials, but I also have been trying new ones recently. Food is something to find joy from, and having a little snack that you look forward to and that makes you feel satisfied can honestly transform a day. Take a half hour to treat yourself and your stomach. I promise you won't regret it!

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES

Quaker caramel rice crisps are Sabina's "absolute favorite sweet treat."

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES

This egg poacher will elevate your ramen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASOYA FOODS USA LLC

Sabina recommends this kimchi brand.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES

These pita chips taste delicious with cheese.

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Blue blooded: University of Connecticut Men's Basketball returns to dominance

by Cole Williams '25
STAFF WRITER

It was a cold night in January, 2020. The UConn Huskies men's basketball team had just suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the rival Villanova Wildcats. Yet the Head Coach of the Huskies, Dan Hurley, sat behind the microphone and defiantly told reporters, "People better get us now. That's all. You better get us now because it's coming." Hurley couldn't have been more correct, because just three years and two months later, they won, and in absolutely dominant fashion.

Last Monday, the UConn Men's Basketball squad defeated San Diego State to capture its fifth national championship. With a final score of 59-76, the title game was one final blowout to cap off one of the most dominant runs in March Madness history. Throughout their six-game, three-city run to college basketball royalty, the Huskies beat every single one of their opponents by at least a baker's dozen. According to the NCAA, only 2.08% percent of brackets had UConn winning it all. Not only did the Huskies defy the disbelievers, they resoundingly crushed their competition along the way.

Just five years ago, the UConn Men's Basketball program was at its lowest point in decades. The team had just finished off their 2018 season with a dismal 14-18 record and had just fired head coach Kevin Ollie in the midst of an NCAA investigation into possible recruiting violations. Hired in the aftermath of the investigation, Dan Hurley faced the arduous task of returning the storied, yet broken, program to the summit of college basketball.

Striving to attract recruits to UConn, Hurley took the program's four trophies from their case and brought them to his office. However, as time wore on, he brought the trophies back to their case and offered his recruits a new mantra: "Let's get one of our own." This signaled the beginning of a new era in Storrs, Connecticut. Hurley wanted his program to be defined not by the past, but by the present.

After the 2020 tournament was canceled, Hurley's Huskies returned to March Madness in 2021 as a no. 7 seed, bowing out to #10 Maryland in the first round. UConn looked even more polished in 2022, and they returned to the Big Dance, this time as a no. 5 seed looking poised for a deep run, before getting upset in shocking fashion to no. 12 New Mexico State in the first round yet again in an utterly disappointing postseason.

When their 2023 campaign first kicked off in November, the Huskies were unranked in the Associated Press and the Coaches' Poll. UConn put any pessimism about the program to rest in a heartbeat. Led by junior center Adama Sanogo, they easily swept through the non-conference portion of their season with a perfect 11-0 record. Among those 11 opponents was Alabama, which eventually entered the NCAA tournament with the top overall seed. Long story short, the Huskies dispatched Alabama by a 15-point margin.

As the holiday season rolled around, the Huskies began their maze through the Big East, a conference that featured many more basketball powerhouses than just UConn. After winning their first three games of the conference slate to improve to a perfect 14-0 and a #2 national ranking, UConn fell flat on its face. The Huskies fell to four of their next six opponents, plummeting all the way down to a #24 ranking. Amongst those losses included measly St. John's and Seton Hall. Hurley attributed these losses not only to a lack of strong defensive play that became a staple of this UConn team down the stretch, but also to a feud he started with Big East officials that he says distracted him from coaching.

UConn finished the season strong after the doldrums of mid-January, though. The Huskies went 8-1 to close out their Big East slate, finishing with a 24-7 overall record and 13-7 within the conference, good enough for a fourth-place finish in the Big East. UConn then went on to defeat Providence in the first round of the conference postseason tournament before falling to Marquette in a 68-70 heartbreaker. They were one loss away from yet another postseason failure, so the Huskies had to show up for every game.

Upon entering the 2023 NCAA tournament as the no. 4 seed in the West Regional bracket, the Huskies were paired up with Iona in the opening round. Despite being down 39-37 at the half, UConn opened the second half on a tear on their way to winning by a score of 63-87. They continued in the same vein against St. Mary's in the second round, winning 55-70. With this win, they earned a trip to Las Vegas for the Sweet Sixteen for the first time since their championship run in 2014.

In Las Vegas, the Huskies were paired with Arkansas, a feisty yet inexperienced team coming off an upset defeat of the defending champion Kansas Jayhawks. The Razorbacks proved to be no match for the mighty Huskies, who dominated them by a score of 65-88, setting up a date with a juggernaut Gonzaga squad in pursuit of their elusive first ring. The Bulldogs were to be UConn's toughest opponent yet.

As the Elite Eight tipped off, the Huskies once again flexed their defensive muscle, keeping pace with the third-seeded Bulldogs as the first half drew to a close, UConn up by a margin of seven. The Huskies opened up the second half with what had become a trademark surge, overwhelming Gonzaga's defense and forcing their star forward Drew Timme to the bench with foul trouble just two minutes into the frame. From then it was all UConn, leading by 33 late in the game before settling for a final score of 82-54 and a trip to the Final Four for the first time since 2014. The Huskies were back in business for the first time in almost a decade.

The Final Four featured the Huskies along with three others who were making their debut on college basketball's biggest stage: Miami, San Diego State and Florida Atlantic. UConn routed Miami by 13 points to secure a spot in the National Championship game against San Diego State, who clinched a spot in the title game after a buzzer-beater against Cinderella squad Florida Atlantic.

While it would be useful for the purposes of this article to rave about the excitement of the championship game, it was really rather mundane. The Huskies were in command of the Aztecs the whole way to a 59-76 victory and a fifth ring. With the victory came a shiny piece of well-deserved hardware for star center Adama Sanogo, who was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. For the fifth time in program history, the Huskies were on top of the college basketball world.

It was a long nine years of trials and tribulations, but the UConn Huskies Men's Basketball program returned to glory in dominant fashion. With their win they ended any doubts about the program's status: UConn is now a certified, blue-blood college basketball program. No other team has won more championships in the last quarter-century than the Huskies. No longer can anyone talk about the storied histories of programs such as Duke, Indiana, Kansas and the like without including the University of Connecticut. Coach Hurley and the Huskies will now look to build on their success by producing more consistent results. This will start with their bid to defend their title in 2024.

Affirmative Action will likely end in the coming months: how will Hamilton Admissions respond?

by Billy Marin '25
INVESTIGATIVE EDITOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON

The Siuda House is where the Hamilton College Admissions office is located on campus.

In an op-ed penned by President David Wippman of Hamilton College and Glenn C. Altschuler, professor of american studies at Cornell University, the two wrote that "If the court declares affirmative action unconstitutional, the percentage of students from underrepresented groups at selective colleges and universities will almost certainly plummet, as it has in the nine states that have banned the practice."

"There are educational benefits to having a diverse community. If diversity declines to some extent, then I think we'd lose some of the educational benefit. And that would be unfortunate for our students, for the institution and for society."
- David Wippman

In early summer of 2023, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the legality of Affirmative Action in admissions at America's colleges and universities. Experts believe that the ruling will declare the use of race in considering a student's admission unconstitutional, a 180° turn for how college admissions departments are allowed to consider racial diversity. *The Spectator* spoke with representatives from the Hamilton Admissions Department, administrators and students to learn more about how the changing legal interpretation will affect Hamilton's admissions policies, racial demographics and student life.

Beyond Wippman's personal support, Hamilton as an institution has firmly voiced its support for Affirmative Action, joining 32 peer institutions in filing a brief to the Supreme Court supporting Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, the defendants in the Affirmative Action case. The brief emphasized the shared commitment to racial diversity as an educational benefit, claiming that "Each college deliberately seeks to enroll and house on campus a highly diverse group of students—from different states and countries; from urban and rural backgrounds; homeschooled, private-schooled, and public-schooled; with differing economic circumstances; with different kinds of experiences, talent, or athletic ability; students who will be the first in their families to go to college and, among some of [schools who filed the brief], students with family connections to the schools." The brief went on to describe the educational benefits of racial diversity, saying, "Studies consistently show that diversity—including racial diversity—meaningfully improves learning experiences, complex thinking and non-cognitive abilities."

Wippman expanded on the importance of racial diversity: "There are educational benefits to having a diverse community. If diversity declines to some extent, then I think we'd lose some of the educational benefit. And that would be unfortunate for our students, for the institution and for society."

"I think [an Affirmative Action ban] makes our work harder, but it doesn't change what we want to do, it changes how we can do it. This would represent one of the biggest challenges I think I've encountered."
- John McLaughlin

Dean of Admissions John McLaughlin said that the ruling, "Doesn't change our belief that bringing together people from different backgrounds, including people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, is to the benefit of everyone in our community, and that we all learn as a result from interacting with different people. It does change the way in which we can approach the work and what we can consider in the course of the review process." While McLaughlin was strongly committed to supporting racial diversity, he expressed uncertainty as to the degree this would be possible. "I think [an Affirmative Action ban] makes our work harder, but it doesn't change what we want to do, it changes how we can do it. This would represent one of the biggest challenges that I think I've encountered."

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McLaughlin's uncertainty was largely based on the lack of clarity all observers share regarding what the Court will actually decide; while observers agree that the court will likely rule against Affirmative Action, it is less clear what exactly this ruling will make illegal. While colleges and universities will most likely lose the right to consider an applicant's race, they may have alternatives that can help them create racially diverse classes. That possibility hinges on whether institutions will be able to consider "racial proxies," indicators from other aspects of an applicant's life that correlate to their racial identity, such as zip code, demographics of their high school or socioeconomic status. These factors are legally race-neutral, because they do not consider the race of an individual applicant, but admissions can still look to recruit from racially diverse communities. While these "race-neutral" considerations are potential alternatives admissions offices can use in order to accept racially diverse classes, the conservative-minded Court may rule that if colleges and universities are pursuing these policies solely with the goal of building racial diversity, they are not legal.

In the past decades, nine states have passed legislation banning the consideration of race in college admissions: California, Washington, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, Arizona, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Idaho. In all of these states, rates of students attending school from underrepresented racial minorities dropped radically, despite the efforts of administrators to enroll racially diverse classes. For example, in the University of California system, where a public referendum banned schools from considering race in admissions in 1996, the likelihood of admission for underrepresented racial minorities at the most selective UC schools, Berkeley and UCLA, fell by 30 and 25 percent respectively, compared to pre-ban levels.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Buttrick Hall is the location of Hamilton College President David Wippman's office.

McLaughlin explained several strategies the admissions department could use to ensure that racial demographics at Hamilton do not drastically shift away from under represented minorities."There's interesting work that's being done looking at contextual factors, including socio-demographic data, not on an individual level, but aggregated to community level, and trying to draw inferences about students based on where they live, their school communities, their home communities...it's not going to be as accurate as having perfect individual level information, but there may be opportunities [to support racial diversity by] leaning on socio demographic data."

When asked about how successful creative admissions strategies can be in maintaining racial diversity in a race-blind admissions system, Wippman expressed uncertainty. "Amherst did a study looking at their own recent past admissions and trying to calculate what would have happened if they had applied an entirely race blind standard, and their conclusion was, it would be a big drop [in racial diversity of admitted students]. Again, it'll vary by institution. And so much depends on the way the opinion is actually worded. So I don't want to make a prediction, because I don't know."

McLaughlin expressed more confidence in Hamilton's ability to recruit a racially diverse class, in contrast with Wippman's comments and historical precedent. "I'm optimistic because I know that a lot of people in this field and in this work remain committed to doing whatever we need to do within the confines of the law to continue to recruit and enroll a diverse class." McLaughlin added, "It will be a challenge, but in speaking with colleagues across campus, in the admissions office as well, we have a lot of good ideas in terms of how we'll be able to do this. I'm cautiously optimistic that we will be able to maintain the diversity that we've enjoyed on our campus. But it's going to require a lot of work and a lot of thought."

Beyond recruitment strategies, McLaughlin mentioned the importance of yield in recruitment, especially regarding promoting racial diversity. Yield refers to the rate of students who are accepted to Hamilton and choose to attend. McLaughlin described this process, saying, "Once students have been admitted, we're often trying to reach out to them, not only to congratulate them, but also try and show them what their experience might be like on our campus. It's helpful if we're able to connect students to communities and resources on our campus that they may be interested in, that they may feel some sort of affinity towards and that they may benefit from being part of on our campus."

While the admissions department reaches out to all admitted students, McLaughlin described outreach as especially important for students from underrepresented groups, in an attempt to demonstrate that those groups have a place on Hamilton's campus. With potential changes in the way admissions departments are allowed to consider race, however, the ability to bring admitted students together with potential peers is more difficult. McLaughlin said that, "for students that are coming from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, connecting them to people on our campus who identify in a similar way, or resources or centers that may be of interest to them [is important]. If we don't have the benefit of that information, then it may be more challenging to make those connections proactively."

Wippman explained that Hamilton students from underrepresented communities will have a worse experience should the representation of those groups decrease. "I think one of the benefits of having a diverse community is for members of underrepresented groups to have others from the same underrepresented group on campus, [which] is valuable." He continued, saying, "Even now, there are always students, for example international students sometimes say to me, 'there's no one else from my country here, no one else speaks my language,' so we're not unfamiliar with the challenge of someone being from a group that's not as well represented in the community as others. We'll have to navigate it as best we can and provide as much support as we can."

Julio Dembs '23, Co-President of BLSU, shared his perspective: "The more different you are from a classmate, the more you have to learn from each other. The educational experience available at Hamilton continues to be compromised by a lack of cultural diversity among both students and faculty, and I don't think that's going to change based on what the Supreme Court decides regarding the use of race as a factor in admissions. It may make things more challenging, but the College will still have opportunities to promote racial diversity by emphasizing cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity in the body of students it enrolls. I think what's really going to make a difference is the institution—and that includes us as the student body—making a collective commitment to fostering a more diverse community, not only in rhetoric but also in practice. Frankly, I'm not sure that's happened in either. I think we need to pause and consider what it is we're looking for in prospective Hamilton students, which areas we're visiting for outreach and advertising and whether our practices align with the institution we want to be."